

a) an expandable tubular stent body which is formed of a plurality of ring sections interconnected by connecting support members, which has a first ring section at a first end having a plurality of undulations, a second ring section at a second end and at least one ring section intermediate the first and second ring sections and which has at least one connecting support member extending between and interconnecting the first and adjacent intermediate ring sections; and

D2 b) a stent cover disposed over a portion of the tubular stent body including one or more connecting support members between the first and adjacent intermediate ring sections and secured to the tubular stent body by a plurality of undulations on the first ring section which extend over a first end portion of the stent cover.

REMARKS

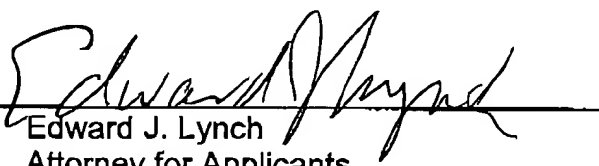
In the prior amendment, applicants added new claims 53 and 49. In the telephone interview with the Examiner, the Examiner expressed the belief that these claims did not overcome the teachings of Nolting in U.S. 6,099,559

The above amendments to claims 49 and 53 are believed by applicant to overcome the Nolting patent. Specifically, the amended claims above require a plurality of ring sections with at least one connecting support member extending between and interconnecting the first end ring section and an adjacent ring section. Moreover, the amended claims also require the stent cover to extend over the connecting support members extending between the first ring section and the adjacent intermediate ring section.

The Examiner has contended that the end caps 18 and 19 of Nolting meet the requirements of the stent cover connectors. However, the Nolting reference does not teach a first end ring section and an adjacent intermediate ring section which are interconnected by a connecting support member extending therebetween. Moreover, Nolting does not by necessity describe a stent cover which extends over the connecting support members between the first end ring section and an adjacent intermediate ring section. Additionally, the Nolting reference does suggest these additional features called for in applicant's amended claims.

Applicants believe that the pending claims define patentable subject matter and respectfully request reconsideration and an early allowance thereof. Applicant's prior response to the Examiner's election of species requirement was directed to the species of Figures 1-10. Applicants respectfully request that only the species of Figures 8-10 be considered by the Examiner and note that claims 49 and 53 read on the elected species. Changes to the claims 49 and 53 are shown in the attached sheet entitled **MARKED-UP VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES MADE.**

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend claim 49 and 53 to read as follows:

49. (Twice Amended) The stent assembly of claim 53 wherein the stent cover is secured to the body of the stent by [second end cover section is disposed under] undulations of the second ring section [and on underlying portions of the second ring section] which extend over a second end portion of the stent cover.

53. (Amended) A stent assembly, comprising:

a) an expandable tubular stent body which is formed of a plurality of ring sections interconnected by connecting support members, which has a first ring section at a first end having a plurality of undulations, a second ring section at a second end and at least one ring section intermediate the first and second ring sections and which has at least one [cover connector integral with the tubular stent body and configured to secure a stent cover to the tubular stent body] connecting support member extending between and interconnecting the first ring section and an adjacent intermediate ring section; and

b) a stent cover disposed over a portion of the tubular stent body including one or more connecting support members between the first ring section and the adjacent intermediate ring section and secured to the tubular stent body by [at least one cover connector] a plurality of undulations on the first ring section which [extends] extend over [a] a first end portion of the stent cover.